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ABSTRACT

A proposal is set out for a program designed to improve education by concentrating resources across all levels of instruction. It involves a mutual agreement between the Philadelphia Public Schools, the school community, and Temple University to pool their personnel and materials with the aim of creating an educational program that will individually meet the needs of each school and interweave students instruction, teacher preservice education, staff development, and community involvement. The program will begin in selected schools close to Temple University where a majority of the faculty are willing to participate. Administrative authority will rest with the building principal. An advisory council in each school will be composed of school personnel and officials from each cooperating authority and will assist in the development of the program. The university will benefit from the moving of certain aspects of its teacher education program into the schools, the communication between the community and the school will be increased, the barriers between pre- and inservice teacher education can be eliminated, and a professional career ladder in teacher education might be established. The methods of implementing and financing the program are briefly described, and the role of the American Federation of Teachers in the program is outlined. (MBM)

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TEMPLE PROGRAM
PROPOSAL FOR THE PORTAL SCHOOL PROGRAM

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Portal School is to improve education in a school building by concentrating sufficient resources across all levels of instruction--students, teachers, parents, administrators and professors. It should be thoroughly understood that the Portal School Concept is not a University Laboratory Demonstration School, nor is it an experimental school, nor a design to build a single utopian model to be superimposed on all city schools. These experiments of university governed public schools have been tried for years, and most have failed, probably because they were fraught with the intellectual's ideas for someone else to implement and were never institutionalized over time with quid pro quo reality. The Portal School is not simply another gimmick. Rather, it is a mutual agreement among the Philadelphia Public Schools, the School Community and Temple University wherein all parties will pool their personnel and materials. Herein lies the distinct advantage of the Portal School--its unique flexibility to cooperatively develop, implement and continually change programs as the situation demands. The goal is to create a total educational program that will individually meet the needs of each separate Portal School on their terms, wherein student instruction, teacher pre-service education, staff development and community involvement are interwoven. This is an attempt to break down the artificial barriers of discrete educational authorities--the School, the Community, and the University--where each operates as though the assumption were that their educational contribution can be delivered only on their premises and under their sole authority. The result is that the learning process becomes correspondingly discrete and the learner must put together dissimilar pieces of instruction and somehow internally coordinate them into an education. Nothing in the Portal School Program will be in violation of the Federation contract.

II. Administration

The program will begin in selected schools in the districts which surround Temple University, Two, Three, Four and Five. Initiation will be made by the District Superintendent upon consultation with the proposed building Principal, Staff and Community; the Teachers' Union Officers; and the Dean of Temple's College of Education or his designee. The key to selection of Portal Schools of Temple will be in the majority of the faculty who are willing to participate in programs that will be initiated in their school. Each Portal School will have an Advisory Council to the building principal whose composition will be divided between those daily functioning in that building and officials from each cooperating authority. It should be clearly understood that administrative authority remains vested in the building principal. The Council is only Advisory to facilitate the instructional program in that building. The Federation Building Committee will act as non-voting consultants to the Advisory Committee. The Building Committee can bring in other members of the bargaining unit at its discretion and that a typical Council might be composed of the following people, but each building will have the prerogative of composing its own Council.

School: Building Principal as Chairman
District Coordinator of Teacher Education

Federation: P.F.T. Building Committee
P.F.T. District Representative
School-Community Coordinator

Community: Parent Representatives (whose children attend the Portal School)

University: Professor assigned to the building
Assistant Dean for University-School Relations

Positions jointly appointed by the School and University will be in compliance with the attached memorandum of understanding.

III. Program

The function of this Council is to advise in the coordination of the resources and expertise of each cooperating agency into a comprehensive, relevant, and responsive educational program. The task is to select from the resources of each partner those which are most appropriate and feasible to the achievement gain of pupils in each portal school. Obviously, these will differ with the needs and resources of each school. In the following paragraphs, possible advantages for each partner are suggested. Specific illustrations for implementation are discussed in Section IV.

University

It is presumptuous in many facets of teacher education to assume that prospective teachers can be taught how to teach children in the absence of children, and children are not schooled on university campuses. Furthermore, if teachers teach the way they have been taught it is crucial that teacher educators teach by example. An additional and paramount societal advantage to the University is that it must respond to its community in line programs as well as its public rhetoric. One certain way to improve inner city schools is to improve the teaching conditions in those schools so that they may eventually become more desirable places of employment in the city. Therefore, it is in the best interests of all concerned that institutional (rather than personal or special project) Portal Schools be created so that there is a vehicle in which to move those facets of teacher education that can be more appropriately learned beyond the university campus. (A concept similar to the medical school-hospital arrangement whereby such hospitals gain more and higher qualified assistance than non-university connected hospitals.)

The advantages of combining all or some of these programs or their components in a single building are compelling.

1. There is a stable population of students in that school for four consecutive semesters who will know the students, teachers and modus operandi in that building and therefore should be better prepared first year teachers for Philadelphia.

2. These programs would provide more professional staff in a school which would result in more programs for pupils. This staff is available for a variety of consultive, testing, workshop, staff and program development, and material construction purposes at no additional cost to the school.

3. Since the same professors who regularly teach courses at the university are in the Portal School, there is no reason why regular university courses could not be offered during the regular school day (or immediately afterwards) since pupils classes can be taught on a rotating, once-a-week basis by student teachers under university supervision or by professors teaching demonstration lessons while some teachers are engaged in in-service courses.

4. School personnel with released time for program improvement such as lead teachers, department chairmen, curriculum supervisors, administrators, teacher aides, and district office personnel can participate in staff and program development with university professors and resource personnel.

5. In Portal School programs, evaluation can be more readily achieved since the expertise for evaluation will be part of the team that created the programs. All parties--Community, School, Federation and University--will share in this program evaluation. Evaluation of School District personnel will be conducted under the usual procedures of the School District.

6. With enough programs per building, the University may be able to justify financing a full-time professor per school to assist in the development and coordination of Portal School programs.

The American Federation of Teachers

A critical force in improving urban schools is the Teachers' Union. They are the historical advocates of quality education for students and the employment of fully certified and qualified teachers. It would be unrealistic to launch any urban school improvement program without the advice and cooperation of the elected agency of the teaching faculty. School improvement programs initiated in cities throughout the nation, without the input and support of teachers' organizations have never become institutionalized and have usually resulted in short-term gimmicky projects of high promise and low results which lasted only as long as the federal or other non-school budget funds existed.

A. Teachers who have already experienced their own undergraduate teacher training programs and have developed expertise in a working school situation will be in a position to evaluate the undergraduate courses which are provided for the practice teachers.
B. They will also be in a position to insist on modification and improvement of the post-graduate courses needed for permanent teacher certification or for other certificates.
C. Because they will have the opportunity to observe a practice teacher program in actual progress, they will be able to participate in the evaluation process which will bring about improvements in the program itself.
D. Availability of university courses for teachers in participating faculties will permit them to contribute to the development of courses to prepare lead teachers, paraprofessionals and other such employees. These positions, which have been developed by the union through its negotiations, will be helpful to the teachers already working in the faculties and to the practice teachers.
E. Teachers will have the principal responsibility for choosing and procuring the books, instructional aides and supplies needed for improved instruction. The program should provide time for the development of new instructional materials and methods.

The Community

In all cities there have been severe problems between the Community and the School, largely brought about through insufficient communication,

understanding, and cooperation between the two. Regarding teacher preparation, Community (and Federation) input is virtually nonexistent. This is a pathetic situation since all parties have the same goal--the education of students. If this is the goal, certainly the production of better-prepared teachers and a more effective curriculum will help solve it. The aim of the Portal School, from administrative structure to implementation, is based on the premise that those closest to the problem must have an opportunity to contribute to its resolution. There is no way of ignoring a bona fide Community input at a constructive local level. The following are examples of such input and their corresponding rationales.

A. There is expertise in Community leaders which is not generally recognized by universities but is essential in the instruction of prospective teachers who are preparing to teach in inner-city schools. In their regular courses, no university can deliver the field experience, the kinds of practicums about inner-city life, employment, families, gangs, etc., and their relation to schools, that community people can provide. In the Portal School, such community expertise would have a significant influence in the preparation of programs which could better prepare teachers in understanding the environmental forces operating on the students they are to teach.

B. Similarly urban schools with their large bureaucratic organization, are now only beginning to recognize the need for real parental involvement in school programs. The Portal School would provide an opportunity for parity community input and accountability of university programs. By jointly planning such programs the communication network so essential to parental understanding of the schools would be built into all programs.

C. By participating in this planning a much more immediate and real opportunity would exist for the employment of teacher aides and other para-professionals in schools close to their homes. This could be easily connected with a vertical and horizontal career ladder and lattice training program for community people which could culminate in anything from custodial training to fully certified and degreed teaching positions.

D. In Portal Schools, the communities' voice in educational priorities of the University would be much more powerful. Thus, all university-related programs in a Portal School building would meet the test of both community and academic relevance.

E. If parents are more involved in the programs of their school, they probably will reinforce the efforts of the faculty and more readily assure their childrens participation. This is true for both school and after school programs.

F. Accordingly, the increase in parental and other community involvement in all school programs will increase the adult-to student contact which is so crucial to pupils' positive reward and achievement gain. However, it is recognized that teacher responsibility will be increased in functioning as an instructional leader.

G. In the past, parents have had to rely on the school system's evaluation of pupil progress most dramatically by city-wide testing. In Portal Schools, parents will have an opportunity to evaluate progress on criteria in addition to mass testing--criteria they will assist in developing.

The School

All inner-city schools are faced with insurmountable problems of student retention, teacher turnover, achievement gain, effective instruction, pupil-teacher ratio, and severe underfinancing to cope with the enormity of their task. It is through the pooling of resources, the streamlining of decision making, and the improvement of teaching preparation that there can be a hope of a solution. Both the school system and the university now operate a variety of teacher workshops, curricular reforms, administrative training sessions and university-connected programs throughout the city; but these are rarely concentrated in a specific school-community with a sequenced focus. The advantage of a Portal School is that it provides a vehicle by which resources can be concentrated in some of the schools where the problems are most severe. The following are illustrations of the contributions by and advantages for local schools. Most of these items have been explained in previous sections.

A. The artificial barrier between pre- and in-service teacher education can be eliminated. (As previously described in the items under University contributions.)

B. Staff development would include prospective teachers, existing teachers, community leaders and administrators with some possibly for university credit. This staff development would become an integral part of the daily educational program of each Portal School.

C. Through a close association between School, Community, and University a professional career ladder might be established in teacher education. Community persons might enroll for high school or college credits, new teachers might become interns in a Masters degree program and existing teachers and administrators might similarly enter individualized doctoral programs.

IV. Implementation

To implement a program with such comprehensive possibilities as the Portal Schools, the Advisory council of each school (described in Section II, Administration) responsible for implementation must have the authority to do so.

A. Current Staffing Procedures

1. Teacher Participation--teachers in the Portal School will have the right to participate in this program, or the right not to participate, without prejudicing their right to remain in that school.

2. Recruitment of New Teachers--candidates for Portal School positions will be processed through regular central personnel procedures.

3. Selection of Interns--Five to ten percent teacher vacancies in

Philadelphia schools will be reserved for interns to be selected by Temple University with the approval of the building principal. The number of interns to be agreed upon by January 31st of each year by the Board of Education and Temple University.

4. Development of Teachers--The implementation of new staffing patterns, unusual or different kinds of teaching assignments recommended by the Advisory Board must be similarly approved by each of the following: the building principal, Coordinator of Teacher Education, Federation, and University. In the event that a total building staff development program is launched, all teachers will be given the opportunity to participate with prime consideration given to those involved in the portal school program.

B. Program Selection and Budget

1. Regular school district programs recommended by the Advisory Board for inclusion in Portal Schools will openly compete for funds. However, once they are awarded, they will not be withdrawn should the School System make a city-wide cutback in those programs.

2. Similarly, those university-funded programs in Portal Schools will not be cut back should the university change its funding priorities but will be firmly inbedded in the College of Education internal budget.

3. The emphasis of program selection for Portal Schools will be upon regularly established and budgeted school and university programs. Any additional programs gained through other funds (federal, state, or private) will be the exclusive property of the Portal Schools so authorized in the funding proposal and will not be re-directed for other non-Portal School programs within the district. Such non-regularly budgeted programs will be so designed that they supplement the regular programs and that a discontinuation or reduction of their funding will not severely curtail the activities of the regular programs.

C. Memorandum of Understanding

1. The District Coordinators in the Portal School Program will remain in the teachers' bargaining unit represented by the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers.

2. Their job rights which are set out in Article II, Section 2a and 2b of the contract between the Board of Education and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers shall be guaranteed.

3. The Coordinators will be continued in their positions in the Portal School Program as long as the program exists if satisfactory performance is maintained.